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## MODERN EDUCATION IN JAPAN

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During the last forty years Japan has been opening her gate to the civilization of the West and for that reason she has come to produce changes which have meant remarkable development in all phases of her social life. During the period of Europe's and America's striving for culture, Japan sat idly dreaming in self-contentment in a very imperfect state. Having once appreciated the results of her open policy she adopted western civilization with wonderful rapidity. The Japanese, in a little more than a half-century, although still having much to learn, have reached a point of appreciation of modern culture, the rapture of which it took the occidentals centuries to reach.

Popular lectures on science, philosophy, and religion given by professors in colleges and universities; daily papers, periodicals, and magazines, discussing popular and technical subjects, which are in general widely read; girls' sewing clubs and cooking associations; mothers' circles, industrial conferences, and entertainments for the children; these constitute the present enterprises for the purposes of social education. Christian and Buddhist philanthropies are not unknown there as well. On the other hand, education is carried on efficiently at public expense in the schools, and this opportunity is eagerly sought by the youth.

The idea of public education in Japan has grown out of regard for the state, and the individual is educated because he will make a more capable subject when thus trained. Japan stands loyal to the civic state and the imperial household. Though the person is subordinated to the state, yet his individuality is not snuffed out nor are his ambitions checked unless he disregards the public welfare in not respecting the rights of others as granted by the state. A first consideration with the

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Japanese is their patriotism and loyalty to the imperial household. It will be seen then that the purpose of their education is to make good subjects rather than good citizens. There has never been any friction between the Mikados and their peoples, which indicates the absence of despotism and the general good will of the Mikados. The Mikado is not worshiped as a divine being, as being endowed with absolute right, but rather is he esteemed and loved by his subjects because of his interest in them. The history of Japan reveals the close relationship between ruler and people. To the minds of the Japanese, this close relationship of ruler and people has strengthened them to withstand the assaults of outside nations on the one hand, and has brought co-operation in the development of internal resources on the other.

Appropriate rights and liberties are granted by constitutions and laws to the subjects so that there is little of internal discord. In April, 1868, the year following the enthronement of the present emperor, the following memorable oath was sworn, known in history as the "Imperial Oath of Five Articles:"

(1) Deliberative assemblies shall be established, and all measures of government shall be decided by public opinion; (2) all classes, high and low, shall unite in carrying out vigorously the plan of the government; (3) officials, civil and military, and all common people shall, as far as possible, be allowed to fulfil their just desires so that there may not be any discontent among themselves; (4) absurd customs of former times shall be broken through, and everything shall be based upon the just and equitable principle of nature; and (5) knowledge shall be sought for throughout the whole world, so that the welfare of the empire may be promoted.

Then, in 1890, the "Imperial Edict on Education" was published. The translation into English is inadequate to bring out the profound meaning of the original. It reads as follows:

*Know ye, our subjects:*

Our imperial ancestors have founded our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and deeply and firmly implanted virtue. Our subjects, ever united in loyal and filial piety, have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of our Empire, and herein lies the source of our education. Ye, our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourself in

modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the constitution and observe laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the state; and guard and maintain the prosperity of our imperial throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrations of the best traditions of your forefathers.

The way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by our imperial ancestors, to be observed alike by their descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence in common with you, our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.

[Imperial Sign Manual] [Imperial Seal]

This educational edict is read on Commencement Day or at some solemn convocation by the principals of all institutions throughout the empire. It is usually followed by the national anthem which, written in English by Chamberlain, reads as follows:

A thousand years of happy life be thine!  
Live on, my lord, till what are pebbles now,  
By age united, to great rocks shall grow,  
Whose venerable sides the moss doth line.

Only a few schools kept in old style by federal lords were to be found forty years ago; but today there are twenty-eight government schools, 27,156 public schools, and 1,678 private schools. Education in the lower primary is compulsory and if children are able they attend kindergarten before that. The work of the lower primary begins at seven years of age. This is the only grade in the whole system that all take. At the close of the lower primary some go to the high school, others to the higher primary. It is not advantageous and is often impossible to change one's plans after having left the lower primary. The courses of study are arranged to prepare the individual in harmony with his choice of career. The different grades of school, with the years spent in each, is illustrated in the outline on the following page.

Those who are able to continue in school up to the high school finish the lower primary and then enter the lowest class of the high school. Those who are not able to keep up studies through

the high school, may receive the higher primary if they wish; for those who enter high schools have in prospect to continue their higher education. Here, then, the course is more a fitting school; and in the higher primary, the course taken by those not expecting to continue educational study is more informational and general. Also one may see from the outline how those finishing the high school may go to the higher school which fits directly for the university, or the higher normal school, or to any other of the schools in the list. What one will be allowed to do will be determined always by the preparation which has been made.

Kindergarten .....	1 or 2
1. Primary } Lower .....	4
} Higher .....	4
2. High school .....	5
Normal school .....	5
3. Higher school .....	3
College .....	3
Higher normal school .....	3
Industrial school .....	3
Commercial school .....	3
Agricultural school .....	3
4. University .....	3

Boys and girls are trained together in the primary school, but segregation is the order in the high schools and colleges. Further, women are not allowed entrance to the university. There is only one ladies' university in Tokyo, which, of course, is not as strong as the men's universities. The idea of segregation has obtained in Japanese education because of the difference of aim in education for the different sexes. To meet this difference in aim there is a difference in courses of study. Girls study sewing, cooking, flower-arrangement, etiquette in serving tea, and the boys devote themselves to military discipline and other physical training, in addition to the subjects common to both. The Chinese language and Old Japanese are studied as classics, while either English, German, or French is required as a foreign language. An association has been formed to seek to prune away from the Japanese language the Chinese characters which form a considerable part, partly because of national pride and partly because these characters are, as a rule, difficult to master; also because

they are out of harmony with the forty-eight letters of the alphabet, which are phonetic.

In the government normal schools tuition is free, but in all others a tuition is charged. Graduates of private schools are not recognized as regular teachers until they pass the government examination; however, some high schools and colleges supported by private funds are classed by the Department of Education with the government schools and thus their graduates are recognized by the government. In these schools as well as in all government schools, the textbooks used must be officially sanctioned by the Department of Education. There is uniformity of class periods, of hours for opening school, of hours for closing school, of recesses, etc., throughout the realm. These regulations vary with the grade of school, e. g., the length of recitation period is longer in the higher schools. All exercises pass off in an orderly way by word of command. The pupils hold their teachers in great respect as one would suppose.

One of the imperial universities has 7,000 students, and one of the private universities 9,000. In high schools and colleges there are 500 students on the average. From thirty-five to forty pupils is the number allowed in one classroom and a certain number of square cubits is required for each pupil. The ventilation of the room, the size and position of the windows, the height and structure of desks and chairs are closely examined. In primary and secondary schools two or three pupils are appointed each day to look after their own classrooms, closing and opening the windows, furnishing chalk on teachers' desks, cleaning blackboards, and scrubbing their recitation rooms. Thus they are taught how to look after things, how to improve themselves by daily observations and instructions. Also, flower-beds are provided within the school grounds where children sow seeds and care for the plants and thus learn how to cultivate them, incidentally learning the beauty of nature.

Among the numerous benefits resulting from the adoption of western civilization is that of the physical emancipation so evident to the Japanese themselves. In their earlier history, before the introduction of Chinese civilization, they were large

and robust. In the museum at Tokyo are some relics of ancient armor and costumes which even the largest of Americans could not use, and there are ladies' dresses displayed, worn by ladies twice the size of the average Japanese lady of today. About the third century of the Christian Era Confucianism governed the thought and life of Japan, imposing absurd restrictions in manners and customs; social distinctions were firmly fixed and the rights and liberties of the individual minimized; liberty and education came to be denied to women. Nobility in time oppressed the lower classes, and laws were fixed which controlled the daily life in striking detail, such as what to eat, how to cook, how to dress, and how to build houses, the violation of which cost not only the lives of the offenders but of the entire family. There arose occasionally some heroic men and women who sacrificed their lives for the sake of revolution, largely to no avail. They were compelled to sit on their bended knees, talk in whispers, etc. Women were even more miserable. The result of these unreasonable restrictions, generation after generation, was to produce men and women with weak and deformed bodies and minds.

At present boys and girls receive physical training throughout their school training. All kinds of modern gymnastics and athletics are prevalent and the schools and colleges are quite generally supplied with teachers who have been graduated from government normal schools of gymnastics. Matched games and contests are quite as common there as elsewhere. Even the most conservative parents are interested in the school education of their children, especially in the physical education, and they allow great liberty to their children in this respect. Not only in schools but also in public gardens there are furnished gymnastic apparatus, tennis lawns, etc. for public use and enjoyment.

The young are taught to live a noble life not merely for their own sake, but for the sake of their brothers in the near neighborhood, who still remain in darkness. There is great enthusiasm among those who have been fortunate enough to receive an education to carry the message of light throughout the realm and their regard for America is always expressed in the kindest way.